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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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20 December 1948

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 106

SUBJECT: Soviet Capabilities to Wage Chemical Warfare.

1. We believe that the Soviet Union is well prepared to develop and produce chemical warfare matériel using the known techniques and agents which have evolved since World War I. By 1 July 1949 the USSR ought to have ready for operational use on a large scale items of recent development, such as diphosgene oxime and the nerve gases.

2. This opinion is based upon the following considerations:

a. Research.

Chemists associated with the Kazan Chemical Technology Institute ought to have synthesized new and more toxic members of the nerve gas series by 1 July 1949. By that time, progress toward large-scale production will have been made. Shortly after 1 July 1950 one or more of these new agents may be expected to be in advanced stages of field-testing with a good probability that stockpiling will have begun.

b. Field Tests.

In recent months it has been established that a new agent, diphosgene oxime, has been field-tested and accepted for use in a stabilized form, probably by special units of the Red Army. Although well known to the Chemical Corps, U.S. Army, and regarded as not the most potent of chemical weapons, diphosgene oxime nevertheless could have considerable effect upon inadequately protected military and civilian personnel.

c. Types and Production of Agents.

The German Army in World War II captured in forward positions large stocks of Soviet munitions charged with mustard, prussic acid

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and phosgene. Recent reports indicate that most of the Soviet plants which produced these weapons are still in production or in stand-by condition and the quality of the agents has been proven by their stability on storage for lengthy periods.

After World War II the USSR came into possession of a complete plant with operating personnel for the manufacture of the deadly nerve gases developed by the Germans. Sizeable stocks (estimated at no less than 5000 - 6000 tons) of one of these agents were likewise captured by the Red Army. Recent reports indicate that the stockpile is being increased daily from current production in Germany and the USSR. For adequate protection against these new agents, filters and masks, which are at present only in the design stage in the U.S., are required.

d. Dissemination.

While recognizing that the use of chemical agents in warfare requires the perfection of the means of delivering them to the target, it is nevertheless our belief that in the case of the USSR, adequate means of dissemination using conventional weapons such as artillery shells, aerial bombs, and aerial spray tanks are now at hand.

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